

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Thursday 19 November 2015 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan (Chairman)
Councillor David Bond (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alexander Bridgwood
Councillor Stuart Curtis
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Pat Mewis

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Mark Sturgess	Chief Operating Officer
James O' Shaughnessy	Team Manager, Business Improvement and Corporate Governance
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Steve England
Councillor Angela White
Councillor Stuart Kinch

Membership: There were no substitutes appointed for the meeting.

39 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 13 October 2015 (CAI.25 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee held on 13 October 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

40 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

41 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (CAI.26 14/15)

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 11 November 2015.

It was reported that all actions within the report were marked as completed since the previous meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 11 November 2015 be received and noted.

42 PROGRES AND DELIVERY – PERIOD 2 (PROJECTS) (CAI.27 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the second of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which dealt with the projects.

The Chief Operating Officer reminded Members that the Progress and Delivery reports were by exception only, either above or below target, and only reported on those projects currently in delivery stage which were regularly monitored.

The report contained updates on the items contained in the previous report and introduced one new item.

- Selective Licensing was now on track to deliver within the revised timescale.
- Rural Public Transport had earlier been considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee and was now deemed back on track.
- Flare in the Field and Comet – work was ongoing to resolve IT issues, and a report was due through the next governance cycle.
- The bungalows on Corringham Road has encountered unforeseen difficulties so were not being progressed.

Note: Councillor Bridgwood arrived at 6:35pm

It was further noted that this report had been considered by both of the Council's Policy Committees and Members were provided with the Minute arising from each.

With regard to the bungalows on Corringham Road, in response to Members' questions, the Chief Operating Officer advised that this had been, in a

commercial sense, a finely balanced project from the outset. The reasons for the project not been progressed at this time were outlined to Members.

The Local Ward Member for the South West Ward, referred to the Selective Licensing Project, and thanked officers for the professional and positive way in which the current consultation process was being undertaken. He considered this to be a good example of how consultation should be approached and encouraged that this approach be adopted in the future.

RESOLVED that having examined the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee, assurance was received that the appropriate level of challenge was being made by those Committees to the information contained within the report.

43 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY – PERIOD 2 (SERVICES) (CAI.28 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the second of the newly styled Progress and Delivery reports for 2015/16, which highlighted the areas where services were “off target”, the reasons for this and the proposed rectifications. The report also provided Members with an opportunity to examine the reasons why performance was off track and seek assurance that the measures which had been put in place were sufficient to tackle the issues which had been identified with the service.

The report also updated Members on those areas which had been highlighted in the first quarter report, these being: -

- Complaints Received
- Health Trainers
- Gainsborough Markets
- Local Land Charges
- Development Management
- Waste Collections

Following previous comments by Members the format had slightly changed in order to make the report more legible, with tables including a red ‘R’ or green ‘G’ to indicate their status.

It was further noted that this report had been considered by both of the Council’s Policy Committees and Members were provided with the Minute arising from each.

Making reference to the number of complaints, more specifically, those received against the Planning Department, Members sought and received further details of the nature and type of these complaints. In response, it was noted that these primarily related to slow service; a lack of response or being unable to contact Officers.

However, the Chief Operating Officer outlined some immediate and forthcoming changes that had been made within the department as a result of the Peer Challenge held a few weeks prior, aimed at improving communication. All direct phone lines were now open, as opposed to the duty planner arrangement. The definitive case file for all applications would now be available on line, and the way in which Members were notified of new applications within their Wards had changed with effect from 9 November, meaning all Members now received a list bespoke to them. Officers were confident that improvements would be seen as a result.

Members sought an update on the current turn-around times within the Land Charges Team and the Chief Operating Officer was pleased to advise that this was currently running at 4 days. The improvement was welcomed.

In concluding, the Chairman thanked Officers for the much improved report.

RESOLVED that having examined the responses given to the report by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Prosperous Communities Committee, assurance was received that the appropriate level of challenge was been made by those Committees to the information contained within the report.

44 SOUTH WEST WARD ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK AND FINISH GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE (CAI.29 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the terms of reference for the South West Ward Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Activity Task And Finish Group, as agreed by the Group at their meeting on 1 September 2015, for approval.

The Local Ward Member for the South West Ward confirmed he was pleased with progress and welcomed the approach being adopted.

Officers referred to the recent incident within the Ward, the arising Member e-mails and the resulting suggestion that a Multi-Agency summit be held. It was intended for this suggestion to be given further consideration by the Group at their next meeting.

The Chairman commented on how successful, such a summit had been within the Hemswell Ward.

In concluding the Vice Chairman and Local Ward Member for the South West Ward urged the Authority to take action and raise the standard of what was considered acceptable within the area before the issues escalated into high end, serious crime.

RESOLVED that the draft terms of reference for the task and finish group (agreed at their first meeting) including the indicative timescale and scope of the work be agreed.

45 FORWARD PLAN (CAI.30 15/16)

The Governance and Civic Officer presented a report setting out the items of business due to be considered through the committee system and asked Members to identify any reports that they wished to be brought before the Challenge and Improvement Committee for pre-scrutiny.

At this stage Members did not require sight of any forthcoming items of Committee business.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

46 WORK PLAN (CAI.31 15/16)

The Work Plan for the business of the Challenge and Improvement Committee was presented, appended to which was a list of outside bodies and examples of organisations in or affecting West Lindsey residents and businesses, in order that Members could determine which organisations, if any they would like to attend a future meeting.

Note: Councillor John McNeill joined the meeting at 6:55pm

Debate ensued and the following suggestions were made: -

- **Gainsborough Town Centre Partnership** – In light of the limited offer available in the Town Centre, the number of empty units and Members previously expressed views to improve this part of the Town.
- **Creation of a Task and Finish Group to look at the Civic Office Function** - It was suggested that this could be something pursued by the current Democracy Working Group, subject to an amendment to their terms of reference. It was suggested that this could be further investigated at the next Chairs Briefing Meeting and the requirements / intent further discussed.
- **Tourism** had been deemed a Member Priority, yet some Members considered progress had been slow. There was a real desire to increase the offer and number of visitors to District and thus the economy. Officers advised that Members were aware of current issues which could not be discussed in open session but made a number of suggestions of bodies which related to the Service Area of Tourism both national, regional and local, including: -
 - **Visit Lincoln**
 - **Visit England**

- **Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire (outside body)**
- **Gainsborough Old Hall Partnership (outside body)**
- **Lincolnshire Tourist Board**
- **The internal working group established by Prosperous Communities Committee to look at this area.**

It was further suggested by Officers that Members may wish to consider a Peer Challenge type of approach to this area of work, and consider asking some of these organisations and groups to assist the Council in identifying how it could realise its ambitions in this area.

- **Dial-a-Ride** – with a view to understanding current provision, future provision plans etc.

The Chairman also requested that absent Members of the Committee, be contacted and asked for their suggestions in advance of the next briefing meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Work Plan be noted; and
- (b) the suggestions made throughout the course of the debate and listed above, be considered at the next Chair's Briefing.

The meeting concluded at 7.04 pm

Chairman